



EVENT PLANNING IN PHASE 2 REOPENING

Prepared June 19, 2020



EVENT PLANNING IN PHASE 2

Montanans have succeeded in limiting the spread and impacts of COVID-19 by working together and following guidance that has been provided by Gov. Bullock and local health officials. This has presented an opportunity to move to Phase 2 of the Reopening the Big Sky strategy. We now have an option for limited mass gatherings (events) in our community. We encourage all event organizers to read this guidance, the [Governor's Phase 2 Directive](#) to help them plan and decide whether they can safely host their event.

Our goal in providing these guidelines is to do everything we can to help you plan for and implement ways to protect all involved attending your event. Organizers should continually assess, based on current conditions, whether to postpone, cancel, or significantly reduce the number of attendees. Each event will be different and unique and there is no one-size-fits-all plan or approach. Take steps now to determine how these guidelines and recommendations fit with your planned event and operations.

Please also know that planning an event during COVID-19 presents unique challenges. Social distancing is paramount and can help prevent disease transmission and assist with contact investigation. An important point to consider is to limit the number of people any one person has close contact both to reduce the probability of exposure to COVID-19, and to allow for the quick identification of close contacts should someone that attended your event test positive for the disease. The smaller the group size, the easier this can be accomplished. The more people at your event, the greater the risk of disease transmission for your guests and clients.

A close contact is currently defined as someone who spent 15 minutes or more within 6 feet of a known COVID-19 case. A public health nurse will follow up with a known contact and try and identify all the close contacts an individual had for the 48 hours previous to symptom onset. This is why social distancing is important to maintain throughout the course of an event and what layout and careful planning is so critical. To that end, we are here to support you and your event planning efforts with the information provided below.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL PHASES:

1. **Assess the health of all staff at the beginning of each shift.** Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 must be sent home. While infected people without symptoms can also spread the disease, this check is important to ensure that visibly sick, potentially contagious people get tested, stay home and are not at the workplace. Symptoms include cough, difficulty breathing, fever, repeated shaking with chills, chills, body aches, headache, sore throat and new loss of taste or smell.
2. **Require participants to stay away from your event if they're sick and to leave if they start having symptoms of COVID-19.** Typical symptoms are those listed above.
3. **Follow frequent sanitizing protocols.**

- a. Make sure surfaces and objects at your venue that people will touch are disinfected before your event. Best practice is to disinfect common hand-contact areas (like doorknobs, pens, counters) multiple times during the event.
- b. Follow CDC Guidance on Cleaning and Disinfecting.
- c. A list of sanitizers effective for COVID-19 is located on the EPA website: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>. Be sure to strictly follow specified contact time and mix rates.

Note: “Cleaning” entails washing with a detergent and water to remove soil, organic matter, and some microorganisms from a surface. Following a detergent and water wash, “disinfecting” entails use of an (EPA)-approved disinfectant that must be applied in accordance with product manufacturer guidelines. A bleach solution at a disinfecting concentration of 1/3 cup bleach per 1-gallon water will also. Please utilize a bleach solution of 50-100 ppm, which is usually obtained by adding 1-2 teaspoons of common household bleach to clean water.

4. **Self-service food bars and buffets are not permitted at this time.**
5. **Assess and know your venue.** Depending on where your event is held, other requirements may apply. For instance, there are additional requirement and recommendations for gyms, pools, theaters and places of assembly. See the [Governor's Directive](#) and additional guidance on [our website](#).

GROUP SIZE REQUIREMENTS

1. Continue to encourage social distancing of at least 6 feet between non-family groups in gatherings of any size.
 - a. There should be no events with more than 50 people unless physical distancing can be achieved and maintained throughout the event.
 - b. Cancel groups larger than 50 people unless physical distancing can be maintained.
 - i. Due to the inherently structured and socially-focused nature of certain gatherings – such as wedding receptions, live music concerts, festivals, and fairs; such events cannot be conducted with appropriate physical distancing and pose a condition of public health importance.
 - ii. As a result, such events should be limited to 50 people or fewer. Events greater than 50 people may be held only if the inherent nature of the event allows predictable and manageable social interactions through a structured physical layout, identified seating arrangements, and controls for ingress and egress, such as at a school graduation or religious service.
2. If you are planning an event with more than 50 people consult with Madison County Public Health Department on a plan to implement adequate social distancing

Note: *Please use this form to provide a plan that health department staff can review to determine whether the event conforms to the Governor's Directive and Emergency Health Rule 2020-001. Please give up to 5 business days to review your plan.*

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. We recommend you develop a written plan to manage Phase 2 operations including how you will plan and communicate changes in your operations at the event, frequent sanitation, and evaluating your facility for areas and surfaces that will need to be cleaned and disinfected. Be sure to address any issues unique to your operations and location. Use the **form** provided to help you create your written plan.
2. Support respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene.
 - a. Encourage the use of face coverings that fully cover the mouth and nose.
 - i. A face covering will help contain respiratory droplets from the wearer and protect other people. You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.
 - ii. The face cover is not a substitute for social distancing and good personal hygiene.
 - b. Provide hand-washing facilities with soap and water and single-use towels. If soap and water are not readily available, provide an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
 - c. Place hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol in several locations to encourage hand hygiene.
3. We recommend developing a flexible refund policy to support staying home when sick.
4. Implement engineering controls as appropriate for your event. These might include:
 - a. Installing physical barriers, such as clear-plastic sneeze guards at ticket booths.
 - b. Paperless or pre-sold ticket sales to limit bottlenecks at entrances.
5. Post signs throughout the event and consider announcements to remind attendees to go home if they have any signs of illness and to physically distance (6 feet) whenever possible.
6. Share information about COVID-19 with staff, participants, suppliers, vendors, and others. Keep them up to date on your local situation, and designate a way for vendors to communicate with you if they have concerns. You can find timely and accurate information about COVID-19 on our web page.
7. If you've hired staff or designated people to fill certain roles during your event, keep in mind that they might have to stay home if they're sick or caring for a sick child or other family member.
8. If you're working with a caterer or other event provider, make sure they have information about COVID-19 and require their staff to stay home if sick. Make sure

- food servers follow required food-safety standards. If you have questions about food safety, please contact the Sanitarian via phone, (406) 843-4275 or [website](#).
9. Consider avoiding the use of event staff who are at high risk of complications from COVID-19, like those over age 65 and those who have chronic medical conditions.

If you have questions or need technical assistance, please call (406) 843-4295.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Madison County Public Health: <https://www.madisoncountymt.gov/230/Public-Health>

CDC Guidance: Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>

CDC Information on Face Masks/Coverings:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>